



United Nations Global Compact

Statement by the Global Compact Human Rights Working Group to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on business and human rights

Since it was established in 2007¹, the Global Compact Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) has followed closely the work of the UN Special Representative on business and human rights. The “Protect, Respect, Remedy” framework proposed by the Special Representative and welcomed by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2008 has greatly contributed to clarifying the nature of the human rights commitments undertaken by Global Compact participants, including as set out in the first two Global Compact principles:

- [Principle 1](#): Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- [Principle 2](#): make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

In particular, the Special Representative's elaboration of the corporate responsibility to "respect" human rights, which implies to avoid infringing on the rights of others and to address adverse human rights impacts that a corporation causes or contributes to has provided important clarification for Global Compact participants on the content of their responsibility to respect human rights and sets out clear guidance for companies committed to living up to their human rights responsibilities.²

The HRWG welcomes the fact that the Special Representative has posted a set of draft Guiding Principles for operationalization of the “Protect, Respect, Remedy” framework. The HRWG encourages Global Compact participants to provide comments and inputs to this important document currently available for comment and review at: www.srsgconsultation.org.

The HRWG also welcomes the inclusive and consultative approach undertaken by the Special Representative in the development of the draft Guiding Principles. Importantly, this inclusive approach has sought the active involvement of business, civil society and trade unions alongside other key stakeholders in the business and human rights debate. As a result, the Special Representative's work now enjoys the legitimacy and widespread support that is essential for sustainable progress in ensuring respect for human rights in business activities around the world.

¹http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/Human_Rights_Working_Group/TOR_HRWG_10_September_2007.doc

² Further information on the complementarity of the UN Global Compact and the UN Protect, Respect, Remedy framework is available at: http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/Resources/UNGC_SRSGBHR_Note.pdf

It is our understanding that the Special Representative will submit two final reports to the Human Rights Council in June 2011: one containing the finalized Guiding Principles, and a second report containing his recommendations to the Council on how the issue of business and human rights should best be taken forward in the coming years. With regard to the second report, the HRWG strongly encourages follow-up to the Special Representative's mandate to maintain and build on the inclusive and multi-stakeholder component that has been so successful in engaging *all* stakeholders over the past five years. Without such a multi-stakeholder element in follow-up options proposed to the Council, the positive momentum that has developed over recent years may be at risk, with fragmentation and polarization to the detriment of human rights. We therefore urge the Special Representative and UN Member States to give strong endorsement to further multi-stakeholder cooperation and involvement in follow-up to the mandate and in all future activities and initiatives in the area of business and human rights.